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RUEHJM/AMCONSUL JERUSALEM PRIORITY 3055  
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SUBJECT: ISRAEL MEDIA REACTION

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SUBJECTS COVERED IN THIS REPORT:  
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[¶1. Mideast](#)

[¶2. Iran](#)

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Key stories in the media:  
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All media reported that Secretary of State Hillary Clinton is expected to arrive in Israel on Saturday after preparatory talks by U.S. Special Envoy for Middle East Peace Senator George Mitchell, who arrives tomorrow.

Makor Rishon-Hatzofe led with what it says is President Obama's rapprochement with Israel and the American Jews. The newspaper expects Obama to deliver a conciliatory speech at the United Jewish Communities General Assembly (GA) next month.

Major media (lead story in The Jerusalem Post) reported that Deputy Foreign Minister Danny Ayalon is the latest Israeli to face possible arrest on war crimes charges during an official visit to the UK. Ayalon returned to Israel last night after a two-day visit to London, during which pro-Palestinian activists attempted to use a section of British law to have him arrested. Ayalon was also heckled at the London School of Economics on Monday.

All media reported that last night a Katyusha rocket fired from southern Lebanon struck the Upper Galilee, causing a deafening explosion and setting a field on fire, but failing to cause casualties or significant damage. The IDF Spokesman's Office was quoted as saying that the IDF immediately shelled the Lebanese territory from which the projectile was launched, using several rounds of artillery. It was not immediately clear who fired the rocket, though initial assessments by Israeli defense officials were that a Palestinian group was responsible. Yediot cited the belief of security sources that the rate of arms smuggling to Hezbollah is at its peak, since the land border between Syria and Lebanon is completely porous. Yediot reported that Israel complained to UNIFIL about the fire from Lebanon. Israel Radio reported that Israeli Ambassador to the U.N. Gabriela Shalev lodged a complaint with the President of the U.N. Security Council (UNSC) and U.N.

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Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. The radio reported that Lebanese PM Fouad Siniora condemned both sides' actions, saying that the Israeli shelling constituted an aggression. Israel Radio reported that the Lebanese Army and UNIFIL disarmed four rockets aiming at Israel from the village of Hula. Israel Radio quoted Terje Roed-Larsen, the U.N.'s special envoy to Syria and Lebanon, as saying a closed UNSC meeting that Hezbollah has retained substantial military strength in Lebanon. A few hours before the attack, Defense Minister Ehud Barak toured the North and praised the "nine years of calm we have had" in the region, "which were interrupted for a number of painful weeks during the Second Lebanon War." "I hope that we can continue this quiet," he said, but warned that Israel was "preparing for other possibilities, including the possibility that you [the residents of the North] will be tested again."

Leading media reported that yesterday the lower house of the Bahrain Parliament passed legislation banning any contact with Israelis, with one source saying this was a direct result of the viciously hostile anti-Israel mood in the Arab world following the Goldstone Report and confrontations over the Temple Mount. The Jerusalem Post reported that a source in PM Netanyahu's office termed the move "unfortunate," and quoted him as saying it was a throwback to the Arab rejectionist positions of the 1960s and 1970s. The Jerusalem Post noted that the parliamentary move stands in stark contrast to a July Washington Post op-ed written by Bahrain's FM Sheikh Salman bin Hamad al-Khalifa, calling for more engagement with Israel.

Maariv, The Jerusalem Post, and other media reported that PM Netanyahu has selected Attorney General Menachem Mazuz, IDF Advocate General Brig. Gen. Avihai Mandelblit, and Cabinet Secretary Zvi Hauser as the members of the team that will examine the Goldstone report.

Yediot (Shimon Shiffer) reported that, following the U.S. administration's strong aversion to comments made by Israeli diplomatic and defense officials against the agreement reached by major powers with Iran, Israeli criticism of the understanding has entirely disappeared. The daily quoted a diplomatic source in Jerusalem as saying: "The agreement that is shaping up is a positive, correct step towards preventing nuclear weapons from Iran." The newspaper cited contacts between the U.S. and Israel regarding Iran's melting of the agreement. The media reported that Iran demands significant changes in the agreement. Israel Radio quoted U.S. National Security Advisor Gen. James Jones as saying yesterday that the U.S. is prepared to respond if Iran does

not abide by its commitments over its nuclear program.

Major media reported that a Patriot missile battery has been deployed in recent days in the Central Region by forces taking part in the joint Juniper Cobra 10 exercise Juniper Cobra 10, which simulates missile fire on the Israeli home front. Journalists were given access to the site overlooking a major city, and shown Israeli and American air defense crews who were working together to turn the missile battery into an active component of a multi-tiered air defense system. Leading media quoted Col. Tony English, commander of the Germany-based U.S. 357th Army and Missile Defense Detachment, as saying: QSince the Gulf War of 1991, not only have we made great strides, but our capabilities have also increased.

Yediot reported that the Defense Ministry and the Tel Aviv Prosecutor's Office have received notices that Gaza Palestinians will file around 1,500 Operation Cast Lead-related civil lawsuits against the IDF for tens of millions of dollars.

HaQaretz and other leading media reported that yesterday settlers threw stones at security forces, who responded by firing tear gas in two separate incidents in the West Bank.

Maariv cited a Hebrew University study that found that many state religious schools tend to replace memorial ceremonies for the assassinated PM Yitzhak Rabin with religious ceremonies to remember the passing of the biblical matriarch Rachel, who had not been commemorated so far. The study says that awareness of the Rabin legacy is increasing in state secular schools.

The Jerusalem Post reported that seeking to place the liberal Jewish lobby J Street firmly in the Israeli and American mainstream, Executive Director Jeremy Ben-Ami compared his organization's positions to that of Israel's centrist Kadima party. Various media reflected a debate as to whether the group defines itself more as pro-peace or pro-Israel.

HaQaretz reported that PM Benjamin Netanyahu is considering attending the Copenhagen climate summit.

All media reported that yesterday a French court sentenced Israeli-Russian businessman Arkady Gaidamak to six years in jail and a 5 million-euro fine for his role in selling arms illegally to the Angolan government in the 1990s and in laundering hundreds of millions of dollars. Gaidamak was one of 42 people charged in the

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case, popularly known as Angolagate. Others include the son of former French President Francois Mitterrand; a former French Interior Minister, Charles Pasqua; and several senior French government officials. All but six defendants were convicted. Because of the sentence, Gaidamak is now considered unlikely to return to Israel, which has an extradition treaty with France. That is why he left for Russia 10 months ago, two months after the trial began.

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II. Mideast:  
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Block Quotes:  
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II. "No Talk about Justice"

Eytan Haber, veteran op-ed writer and assistant to the late Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, opined in the mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot (10/28): QWe've always known that a billion and a quarter Muslims are more than seven million Israelis and that 57 Muslim countries are more than one State of Israel. We bought our special place in the family of nations, first and foremost, thanks to the United States' recognition of our uniqueness: a lone

democracy, the values of the prophets, and the Bible. The change in this view in the U.S. is what has (nearly) turned the entire world against us: the U.S. is fed up with cooperating with us in everything related to the occupation. The great America, which chose to turn a blind eye for 42 years, opened both eyes at once and signaled to the world that the rules of the game had changed. The world was waiting for this moment, and it is reveling in it. The fact is that it woke up. What in the view of a large part of our population looks and sounds completely unjust is, in the view of the new administration, very just, and how. In its view, the 1967 occupation has to end and it is not budging from this position by even a millimeter.... [From another perspective,] Netanyahu is torn within himself -- but the Americans are quietly waiting for him in the corner. They are confident that Netanyahu's moment of decision is approaching. QSometimes life brings you to your knees,Q goes that song about peace and justice. The Americans are convinced that in order to stand tall, you have to start by going down on your knees.

## II. "Facing a Weakened Abbas"

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Palestinian affairs correspondent Avi Issacharoff wrote in the independent, left-leaning HaQaretz (10/28): Q[Mahmoud] Abbas will come to the meetings with the Americans when Palestinian elections will be approaching, and the last thing he needs is the renewal of negotiations with Israel without a complete freeze of construction in the settlements. Nonetheless, Clinton will ask Abbas to restart the negotiations without getting what he has been seeking for so long -- a halt to Jewish construction in the West Bank and especially in East Jerusalem. The U.S. Secretary of State may have the United States to blame for the current situation. The Obama White House and State Department pushed Abbas not to seek a hearing at the United Nations on the Goldstone Commission report on Operation Cast Lead in Gaza. This greatly damaged Abbas' standing in Palestinian public opinion. The Americans had engendered a feeling in Abbas' office that this time the administration was serious in its determination to apply pressure on Israel to stop all construction over the Green Line. President Obama, his Secretary of State and Middle East Envoy were the ones who, over and over, said they were demanding this as part of the first stage of the Roadmap peace plan. The moment they came to an agreement with Israel on a partial construction freeze, they left Abu Mazen high and dry. He was up a tree they had helped him climb. The embarrassing situation in which Abbas finds himself may leave him feeling more than a little betrayed. This helps explain his implied threat in the course of a weekend conversation with Obama that he would not submit his candidacy for the presidency in the upcoming Palestinian elections -- in other words, he would resign. A high-ranking figure in Fatah explained the situation well when asked about it by HaQaretz: QYou can remain calm. On our side, no senior official resigns.

## III. "Let Palestinians Challenge their Leadership"

The conservative, independent Jerusalem Post editorialized (10/28): QIt is simply undeniable: neither Fatah's crooked, dead hand nor Hamas's firm grasp of belligerent medievalism is going to lay the groundwork for a viable Palestinian state. What to do? One way forward is to let the Palestinian Authority die a natural death and encourage its replacement with a completely new, apolitical, and technocratic provisional Palestinian government. Its task, with Europeans playing a trusteeship role, would be political institution-building, socialization toward tolerance, the development of transparent government, and day-to-day administration of Palestinian affairs. Such a provisional government would also

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assume the PLO's legal standing as representing the Palestinians. But the idea would work only if the Palestinians -- perhaps via a referendum in both the West Bank and Gaza -- were given the chance to embrace a new beginning... and did so. A recent New York Times dispatch from Gaza revealed just how fed up modernizing Palestinian

elites are with both Fatah and Hamas -- while pointing out that they had no mechanism for effecting change. A referendum that proposes to replace the Fatah-dominated PA and Gaza's Hamas government with an apolitical provisional regime could at least offer Palestinians a means to choose between more Fatah and Hamas, or something far better. If Abbas is really fed up and ready to go, his departure could presage a revolutionary opportunity.

#### IV. "ItQs Time to Deal Separately with Gaza"

Yossi Alpher, Co-Editor of the bitterlemons.org family of Israeli-Palestinian Internet publications and former director of the Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies at Tel Aviv University, wrote in The Jerusalem Post (10/28): QA Hamas-Fatah unity agreement is bad for the prospect of an Israeli-Palestinian peace process, at least in the near term.... Under present circumstances, a successful peace process means an agreement with the West Bank alone, even though both Israel and the PLO would declare their intention that it eventually apply to the Gaza Strip as well. Eventually -- because there currently is no prospect that Gaza will be pried loose of the Hamas grip. But an agreement with the West Bank alone is better -- for Israel, the Palestinians, the Arab states and the world -- than none.... Moderate Palestinians obviously shy away from contemplating the consequences of moving forward on the West Bank without Gaza: This would shatter their narrative of a two-state solution based on a Palestinian state in the West Bank, east Jerusalem and Gaza. Yet, if there is to be any viability to the notion of an Israeli-Palestinian peace process mediated by the United States, it's time for all parties concerned to recognize that, for the time being at least, Gaza is a separate entity. We all have to begin reevaluating our failed strategies for Gaza. We need to look for new strategies that don't interfere with the process but are not, of necessity, a part of that process.

#### IV. QWhat I Want to Know

Diplomatic correspondent Aluf Benn wrote in the independent, left-leaning HaQaretz (10/28): QI want to know how and why it was decided to embark on Operation Cast Lead in Gaza and to expand it into a ground offensive. I want to know if the decisions were

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affected by the Israeli election campaign then underway and the change in U.S. presidents. I want to know if the leaders who launched the operation correctly judged the political damage it would cause Israel and what they did to minimize it. I want to know if those who gave orders to the Israel Defense Forces assumed that hundreds of Palestinian civilians would be killed, and how they tried to prevent this. These questions should be at the center of an investigation into Operation Cast Lead. An investigation is necessary because of the political complexities that resulted from the operation, the serious harm to Palestinian civilians, the Goldstone report and its claims of war crimes, and the limits that will be imposed on the IDF's freedom of operation in the future. There is no room to argue that the government should be allowed to govern without interference and investigations, with the public passing judgment at the ballot box. The government changed after the Gaza operation and the questions remain troublesome.

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12. Iran:  
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Block Quotes:  
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"Ankara Has Crossed the Lines"

Veteran journalist and television anchor Dan Margalit wrote in the independent Israel Hayom (10/28): QERdogan is adding to his sins as his anti-Israel incitement means that there no longer is an isolated voice from Tehran but a chorus in AhmadinejadQs and his neighborQs axis of evil. The Turkish Prime Minister has freed Iran from its loneliness. No one has risen up against him and the damage can already be seen in some Arab states that refuse to extend their hand in peace and assist in the process led by Obama. When, in a

parliamentary decision, a Persian Gulf country bans ties with Israeli citizens, Jerusalem gets a real notion of the harm caused by Erdogan.... Israel would delude itself if it lets its wishes overshadow the reality unraveling in Turkey. Ankara has crossed the lines. We have to wait for its sobering up under another leadership.

CUNNINGHAM